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UNDER FALSE COLOURS:

An Original Comedietta,

IN ONE ACT.

BY

E. A. DE PASS, F.R.G.S.,

AUTHOR OF "*Debt*."

LONDON:
SAMUEL FRENCH,
PUBLISHER,
89, STRAND.

NEW YORK:
SAMUEL FRENCH & SON
PUBLISHERS,
28, WEST 23RD STREET.

First performed at the Academy of Music, Ha
Nova Scotia, under the management
WILLIAM NANNARY.

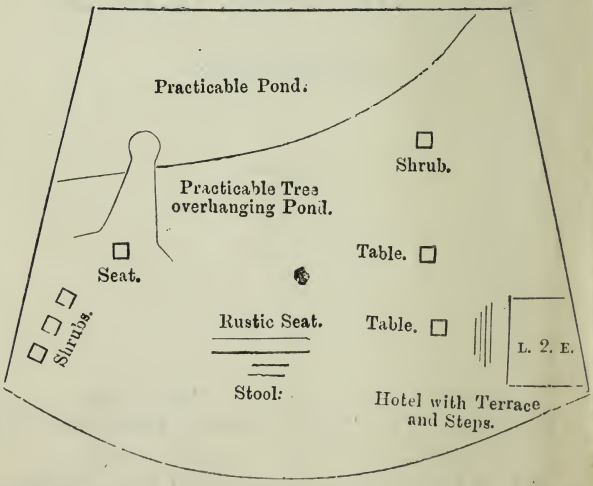
Characters.

Sir Walter Mervyn (*passing as* BROWNE, *a landscape painter*)... ...	... MR. F. G. COTTER.
Mr. Sharpe (*of the War Office*)	... MR. E. A. LOCKE.
Arthur Gale, M.P.	... MR. J. N. BEERS.
Adèle Gale	.. MISS ISABEL WALDRON.
Violet Saville	... MISS LOUISE POMEROY.
Pince (*ladysmaid*)	... MISS MINNIE CHARLES

The scene is laid in the gardens of the "Hotel zur rothen Forellen," at Ilseburg, in the Harz Mountains.

PERIOD—THE PRESENT DAY.

Backing, Mountainous Landscape with Mountain Stream descending and emptying into Pond.



Stage arranged as a garden, with trellis, shrubs, statues, etc., *ad. lib.*

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UNDER FALSE COLOURS.

SCENE.—*The garden of the "Hotel zur rothen Forelle" at Isleburg in the Harz Mountains. Hotel with terrace and steps,* L. 2 E. *Lake at back with trees overhanging. One tree,* R. U. E., *practicable. Rustic seat,* C. *Small marble tables and chairs,* L. *Shrubs, flowers, statues, &c., &c.* ADELE *discovered seated,* C., *embroidering.* VIOLET *on stool at her feet, reading.*

VIO. (L., *closing book*) So they were married and lived happy ever afterwards. They always live happy ever afterwards, don't they, Adèle?

AD. (R., *languidly*) Oh, yes, the regulation finish. No one is contented with a novel that doesn't end with orange-blossoms and favours.

VIO. And no novelist appears to have the courage to take his hero and heroine beyond the ring-fence. They invariably drop the curtain there.

AD. My dear, they are quite right. Having interested us in their puppets up to that point, they dare not go farther and shew the conversion of the ardent, passionate lover into the callous, indifferent husband. (*sentimentally*) Ah! the romance of love ends with marriage.

VIO. (*archly*) That is hardly the doctrine of your French school?

AD. No, in France a woman marries in order to be entitled to have admirers, and if her husband is not jealous it is because he never expected anything else. But in England, the chief pleasure a married woman has, is to make her husband jealous.

VIO. And you are discontented because you can't make yours so.

AD. I am discontented because his want of jealousy proves his want of love.

VIO. You wrong my guardian. I'm sure he loves you very dearly.

AD. Yes, and shews it by his frigid politeness, his undisturbable equanimity, his utter want of curiosity as to my movements, and his indifference to the attentions shewn me by other men.

VIO. He is undemonstrative. In fact, he is very English.

AD. (*with shrug*) And I am rather French. Educated in France, the daughter of a Frenchwoman, is it to be wondered at that I cannot understand your insular way of shewing devotion. If I could only give him a touch, just the least touch in the world, of the green-eyed monster's fangs—

VIO. It doesn't seem to strike you that you never gave him cause for jealousy.

AD. Why, my dear, no more I have—I never thought of that. But now, Miss Violet, I've a crow to pluck with you. Don't you think that for a young lady who is virtually engaged to be married, you allow that Mr. Browne to be rather too attentive, to say nothing of the devoted admiration of Mr. Sharpe?

VIO. Odious creature! I can't bear the sight of him.

AD. I have always heard it said that a woman was insensible to no man's admiration.

VIO. Insensible! No, that's true: she either likes it, or she loathes it. I loathe Mr. Sharpe's attentions.

AD. (*pointedly*) And you like Mr. Browne's.

VIO. (*embarrassed*) That doesn't follow.

AD. Well, for my part, I don't know which inspires me with most enthusiasm—the artist, who wears brown clothes and a brown hat, has a brown beard, affects brown studies, and fills his landscapes with brown tints; or the Civil Service swell, who wears sharp-pointed boots, has a sharp point to his moustache, thinks he has a sharp wit, and certainly has a sharp eye to his own interests. The one, Browne by name and brown by nature; the other, Sharpe by name and sharp by nature.

VIO. (*a little nettled*) Isn't it rather rude to make jokes on people's names? I ask for information.

AD. Violet, my child, I fear you are in danger of being done brown. Remember, dear, that at any moment your cousin, Sir Walter Mervyn, may return to claim you, and don't give way to silly romance.

VIO. Who's preaching about romance? Now I'm the most matter-of-fact girl in the world—there isn't a spark of romance in my composition, but if cousin Walter is not my choice, cousin Walter will not be my husband. But look, (*rising*) here comes Pince with two English letters, disfigured with those ridiculous, sprawling German post-marks. (*enter* PINCE, L. 1 E., *with letters on salver*) One for me, Pince? (*takes letters.* PINCE *exit*, L. 1 E.) It almost brings a waft of English air with it, surrounded with its own atmosphere like a planet. (*gives one to* ADELE)

AD. Yes, the atmosphere of a German post-bag, pugh! Oh! you *are* the most matter-of-fact girl in the world.

VIO. (*opening her letter*) From *your* husband, dear, to *me*.

AD. (*opening hers*) From *my* husband, dear, to *me;* and look what a fat one. The dear old fellow, to write such a long letter when his time must be fully occupied with his Parliamentary duties. (*taking out enclosure*) What's this? an enclosure addressed to Sir Walter Mervyn, Bart., care of Mrs. Gale, &c., &c., and nothing but a small slip of paper for me. (*reads*) "Dear Wife"—affectionate beginning.

VIO. Well, it's pretty and sincere. A dozen men might write you "dearest, sweetest Adele," but only one man can write you "dear wife."

AD. (*dryly*) Thanks. (*reads*) "As Sir Walter, who left town more than a week ago, and who intends joining us in the Hartz, may possibly arrive before me, I enclose a letter for him of which please take charge.—Your affect. Husband." Affectionate ending! And he can't even spare time to write "which" in full but puts a "w" with an "h" above the line, as if the "w" had kicked it there. Oh, here's a P.S. (*reads*) "As there are rumours of an early prorogation, don't be overwhelmed with joy if my enraptured arms enfold you sooner than you anticipate." That's his sarcastic mood.

VIO. Don't be cross. Hear what he says to me. (*reads*) "My glowing Violet."

AD. What does he mean by that?

VIO. Oh, that's his playful mood. Milton talks about the "glowing Violet." When I'm sleepy he calls me his "nodding Violet"—that's Shakespeare.

AD. And he calls me dear wife.

VIO. (*simply*) Well, I shouldn't mind somebody calling me that either. But listen to what follows. (*sits on arm of seat*, L., *and reads*) "Your cousin, my neighbour Mervyn, has returned from his American voyage and proposes joining you in Germany. You know the terms of your father's will. You also know how fondly he desired you to be your cousin's wife. You are a girl of sense, unaffected by such ridiculously romantic notions as distinguish my wife; (*rising and dropping a deep curtsey to* ADELE, *repeats quizzingly*, "Unaffected by such," &c.,) therefore, I need not urge upon you the necessity of making yourself as agreeable to him as possible, and when he falls a victim to your charms—as of course he must—of accepting him as your husband. If you were a silly, romantic girl I should warn you against adventurers of fascinating manners and exterior; as you are not I will content myself by saying that I am—sorely against my will—your too indulgent guardian." There! To satisfy the whims of my dear old father and to prove that I am a girl of sense, I am to take a husband to whom I was left in a will. Of course he'll fall a victim to

my charms, when the best of those charms consists of £30,000 in the funds. Oh! it's heathenish. I'll not be transferred like so much stock. I won't see him if he does come here!

AD. My dear, that would hardly be civil. Besides, if your affections are not already engaged (VIOLET *begins to pluck impatiently at handkerchief*)—I say if your affections are not already engaged, I can see no reason why you should not fall in love with your cousin as well as with any other man. (VIOLET *on stool*, L. C.)

VIO. As if affections were like ready-made goods to be delivered to order.

AD. Oh! Vi, Vi, are you sure that landscape painter hasn't made an impression?

VIO. (*shyly pulling at handkerchief*) Don't talk such nonsense. Of course I like him well enough as a friend—and all that.

AD. (*mischievously*) Oh, indeed! And pray what sort of a position in one's esteem does—an "all that" hold? (VIOLET *has torn a large hole in her pockethandkerchief;* ADELE *takes it gently from her and holds it over her face whilst making last speech*)

SHAR. (*without*) It's no use talking about it; fifteen silbergroschens an hour for a donkey is monstrous. (VIOLET *starts up, pulls off handkerchief, and gets up stage as* SHARPE *enters*, R. 2 E.) Ah! Good morning. Now, Mrs. Gale, what do you think of fifteen silbergroschens an hour for the hire of a donkey?

AD. (*absently*) Is that all they paid you—I mean, of course, is that all they charged you?

SHAR. All! is that all! why, it's iniquitous! no use talking about it. We Englishmen are looked upon as lawful game by these unconscionable cheating Germans. But they don't get much out of me—not if I know it.

VIO. (*up stage*) I shouldn't think any one got much out of you.

SHAR. Thank you, Miss Saville. No, no, I flatter myself I know a thing or two.

VIO. (*aside to* ADELE) Yes, that's about the limit of his knowledge.

AD. Did you come through the Ilsethal, Mr. Sharpe?

SHAR. (*aside*) I can't commit myself by saying yes. (*aloud*) I've just returned. (*turning to* VIOLET) You're a judge, Miss Saville; now don't you think these Germans exaggerate the beauties of this place in their usually mendacious manner? I don't see anything to boast of in the scenery. Yesterday they knocked me up at three in the morning to see the sun rise on

the Brocken, and it never did rise. Regular German swindle. Twice as much fun at Southend and half the expense.

VIO. (L.) Why did you come here then, Mr. Sharpe?

SHAR. (*ogling*) How can *you* ask? Didn't you tell me at Lady Shambleton's that you were going to do North Germany.

VIO. (*turning up*) Little horror!

SHAR. Oh, Mrs. Gale, would you believe it, I saw that fellow Browne coming to this hotel. The way he's followed us about is perfectly contemptible. I expect the fellow will be calling on me in town; he'll find me out if he does.

VIO. Oh, he'll find you out without.

SHAR. (*aside*) Can she be chaffing me? (*aloud*) These artist fellows think they know so much. They'd have you believe they're up to everything. But that Brown is as green as a gooseberry. Why, I saw him give half-a-sovereign to a half-starved peasant for a specimen of some sort. I'd have got it for a thaler, only it wasn't worth a groschen. No use talking about it.

VIO. (*aside*) The mean little beast! (*crosses*, R.)

AD. I suppose you're never taken in, Mr. Sharpe.

SHAR. Taken in? ha, ha, not much. I flatter myself I was never taken in in my life.

VIO. (*aside to* ADELE) And never ought to be in any respectable circle.

SHAR. Why, in the War Office they all come to me for advice. There isn't a fellow would invest a penny without taking my opinion, I assure you.

VIO. Yes, I should think people thought *a lot* of your opinion.

SHAR. (*aside*) Can she be chaffing me? (*aloud*) I hope you do, Miss Saville, for it's a very good one of you, he! he!

"VIO. (*aside*) If I might only box his ears!"

"SHAR. You know Capel of our office? Well, he was thinking of investing some money in a Rink Company. Don't you be a fool, Capel, said I; it won't last; people who rink are never people who think."

"VIO. And people who think are often people who drink. (*aside to* ADELE) Let him put that in his next Soda and B."

"SHAR. I hope you never indulge in that foolish fashion, Miss Saville?"

"VIO. Which? Rinking, thinking, or drinking?"

"AD. How can you be so absurd, dear?"

"SHAR. I mean rinking, of course. Ridiculous fashion. No good object gained, risk of breaking your nose, and all that sort of thing. I hate the sports affected by the young men

of the present day. They take up time and there's no money to be made out of 'em."

"VIO. You don't hunt, then?"

"SHAR. (*with profound contempt*) Hunt! I'd as soon think of—of investing my money in Canadian Railways." But I wish you'd let me take you for a drive this afternoon. (*crossing to* VIOLET) Do say yes, Miss Saville.

VIO. Were you at the *Ross-trappe*, Mr. Sharpe?

SHAR. (*aside*) What does she ask that for? (*aloud*) I was there with you.

VIO. Well, you saw the print of the horse's hoof in the rock. Do you remember the story of it?

SHAR. They told me some silly story about a princess, and a giant, and a horse. I never listen to their nonsense.

VIO. The legend goes that the Princess Ilse was being plagued by the attentions of a monster, (*vehemently*) and sooner than submit to be annoyed by him, she boldly jumped her horse from one side of the crevasse right across the precipice to the other. So. (*she imitates galloping across stage,* R. *to* L., *jumps up steps of terrace and exit into house,* L., *laughing.* SHARPE *watches her with stupid amazement, then takes* R.)

SHAR. Can she be chaffing me? I don't know what to make of Miss Saville, Mrs. Gale. I thought she liked me at one time, when I used to tell her all about that fellow Browne and his doings. But I can't commit myself by saying I believe her sentiments are undergoing a change. Mrs. Gale, (*approaching her; in confidential tone*) you are Miss Saville's friend; don't let her see too much of that fellow Browne. (*sits on bench,* R., *close to* ADELE, *who moves up*)

AD. Why not, Mr. Sharpe?

SHAR. (*edging close to her; mysteriously*) He's spoony on her. Or more likely he's heard she's got money and pretends to be. Some girls have a liking for these harum-scarum fellows in preference to steady, experienced men of the world.

AD. (*drawing out her needle and innocently thrusting it almost in his face*) Like Mr. Sharpe, *par exemple.*

SHAR. (*edging off*) She has rather a good pot of money, hasn't she?

AD. I don't think I quite know what that is.

SHAR. Oh, something warm, you know. Now, Mrs. Gale, you can't have anything against me, you know—no use talking about it, and if I could I would do you any favour—that is—mustn't commit myself—anything not necessitating the use of my autograph; and I have a very high opinion of you

N.B.—The lines within commas may be omitted in representation.

and very great respect indeed, and I think Gale is a very fortunate man. (*aside*) Confounded fool to marry a woman with no money and expensive tastes. (*aloud*) And now won't you tell me how Vio—Vio——

AD. (*quietly*) Don't do vio-lence to your feelings. Say Miss Saville.

SHAR. Well, how Miss Saville's money is tied up.

AD. (*mysteriously*) To the best of my belief—in bags.

SHAR. Now *you're* chaffing me, no use talking about it. You never appear to be serious. You might tell me now how her property is settled. You know I can find out any day at Doctor's Commons by paying a shilling.

AD. Which you would like to save. Well, the will was simple enough, but rather severe. Violet gets nothing if she marries before she is twenty-one, unless it be to Sir Walter Mervyn; if he does not propose to her by that time she inherits everything, but if Sir Walter does ask her and she refuses him, half her fortune is to go to him and half to her, on condition that she still keeps single until she is twenty-five.

SHAR. (*rising*) Phew! and you call that a simple will! I think it's a confoundedly ingenious instrument of torture.

AD. I don't see it. Old Mr. Saville wished to protect his daughter from the wiles of fortune-hunters on the one hand; and he particularly desired her to marry her cousin, Sir Walter, on the other hand. (*rises*)

SHAR. (R.) Well, I don't believe she'll have him, no use talking about it; my opinion is she's sweet on that sneaking painter fellow. (*enter* BROWNE, 2 E. R., *overhears.* SHARPE *sees him*) Oh, yes, as you were saying, Mr. Browne is a most charming man.

AD. (*astonished*) As I was saying, Mr. Sharpe?

SHAR. Hush, here he is.

BRO. Comfortable, clean-looking pond that, Mr. Sharpe, isn't it? Plenty of gudgeons and eels in it, too, but never a Civil Service clerk. (SHARPE *starts suddenly to go*) What, off already? Now don't be in a hurry. Important appointment, eh? Well, if you must, you must. Take care of yourself and don't let those terrible Germans take advantage of your unsuspecting nature. Ha! ha! ha!

SHAR. (*savagely, aside*) Grinning jackanapes!

(*Exit*, R. 2 E.)

BRO. Poor Sharpe, he is constantly falling a victim to his own goodness of heart. His genial manner and generous liberality are no protection to him from designing people.

AD. (*who had gone up*, L., *on entrance of* BROWNE, *comes down*) He is a very prudent man.

Bro. He is indeed, so prudent that he won't commit himself to the extent of informing his cook what he is going to have for dinner, and yet—he would commit matrimony. (*crosses*)

Ad. (R.) What do you mean?

Bro. Why, think you, has he passed the last week in a place that to him is simply purgatory, when he might have enjoyed his beloved Pall Mall for the same period at half the cost? (*sententiously*) He has designs on Miss Saville!

Ad. Ha! ha! why, that's exactly what he says of you.

Bro. Well! and haven't I a right——

Ad. (*quickly*) Eh?

Bro. I mean, hasn't any man a right to desire such a prize?

Ad. When the prize is another's?

Bro. But is the prize another's?

Ad. Miss Saville is as good as engaged to her cousin. (*sits*)

Bro. Now, Mrs. Gale, how can a *young* lady like you speak without indignation of a girl being left as a legacy——

Ad. (*aside*) Oh ho! so he knows that. (*aloud*) But when it is such a suitable match?

Bro. (*indignantly*) Such a suitable match! Yes, it is these "suitable matches," as they are called, that are the ruin of marital happiness. When a girl is persuaded into a marriage because it is "suitable," which means suitable pecuniarily, not humanly, before she has had an opportunity to know what love is, can it be wondered at that she dallies with the mischievous god after marriage. The husband gets jealous——

Ad. Mine doesn't. I wish he would.

Bro. And too often the Divorce Court sees the end of the story. And will you, Mrs. Gale, a lady full of the noblest sentiments—you who are so strong a believer in the necessity of love in marriage—will you help to carry out a barbarous will and bind a charming young creature for life, perhaps to a human monster?

Ad. You sophist. But if I thought Sir Walter were a monster——

Bro. (*carelessly*) Oh, he's a decent fellow enough.

Ad. (*astonished*) You know him?

Bro. I? no—that is—I've met him.

Ad. But he hasn't been in England for the last ten years.

Bro. Oh, I met him abroad. (*embarrassed*)

Ad. (*aside*) I begin to suspect you, my friend. (*aloud*) Mr. Browne, you have convinced me. It is atrocious. She shall not marry Sir Walter. He will only make her miserable. A blasé man of the world, no doubt, who will be unable to appreciate her sweet, fresh nature. He will only propose on account of her property, and will probably gamble that away,

neglect his wife—perhaps be cruel to her. I'm sure he's a brute like most men. I hate him! (*aside*) How do you like that, my friend?

BRO. (*indignantly*) Madam, you encroach on your privileges as a lady. Roué and gambler are hard terms!

AD. You are suddenly very warm in Sir Walter's defence. (*aside*) It's himself, I'm sure of it. (*aloud*) At all events, Mr. Browne, since you can urge nothing against Sir Walter personally, I am sure, you will agree with me that the addresses of other gentlemen to Violet ought to be discouraged until she has seen her cousin, and at least tried to like him; and as the wife of her guardian it is my duty to beg you not to see any more of her till my husband arrives. (*aside*) An idea strikes me; I'll make sure of him. (*takes letter from her pocket and goes towards house, calling*) Pince. BROWNE *sits*, C., *moodily*. *Enter* PINCE, L. 1 E.) Hand this letter to Mr. Browne. (*goes up*, L., *and watches* BROWNE)

PIN. Yes, m'm. (*places letter on salver, hands it to* BROWNE) Letter for you, sir. (*He takes letter, glances, absently, at the address and breaks seal. Exit* PINCE, L. 1 E. BROWNE *throws down envelope and commences to read letter.* ADELE *comes down and picks up envelope*)

AD. I beg pardon, Mr. Browne, but (*holding out envelope*) are you generally in the habit of opening and reading letters addressed to other people?

BRO. (*angrily*) Madam! (*rising*; ADELE *thrusts envelope under his eyes. He becomes very much confused*) I — I —

AD. That's a pair of eyes, and as I am not wanting in visual organs myself permit me to say I see through you.

BRO. I—really, madam—this is most embarrassing--believe me, I would not—

AD. (*laughing*) Read another man's letters for the world. My dear Sir Walter, I do believe you.

BRO. Caught! Yes, Mrs. Gale, I am Violet's cousin. Holding the opinions I do about *mariages de convenances*, I determined to try and win her love in this guise before I asked for her hand. Not having met since childhood she does not recognise me; and I believe—that is, I hope—at least, I fear—I mean, I think—

AD. That you have touched her heart?

BRO. Yes, yes. Do you think so too? Oh! Mrs. Gale, if I only have won such a treasure!

AD. (*mischievously*) Well, I must go and tell her (*false exit*, L.)

BRO. (*stopping her*) For Heaven's sake! You wouldn't be so cruel, after I have trusted, and told you all.

AD. Why, I found you out, you impostor.

U. C. LIB.

Bro. Well, do me this kindness and there's nothing I won't do for you!

Ad. (*turning suddenly on him*) Will you flirt with me?

Bro. Eh?

Ad. Oh! these magnanimous offers. Well, *I* won't say a word. But my husband is expected hourly, so you must either hear "the happy yes falter from her lips" to-day or else you must declare yourself.

Bro. Yes, yes. Oh! if she would only accept Browne the landscape painter.

Ad. And find she'd caught a Tartar! (Browne *kisses her hand and exit*, R. 1 E.) Now I like that young man; there's no ridiculous common-sense about him. My poor Violet, what a trap for you—you who so plume yourself on an absence of romance and yet—if I know anything of my own sex—would marry this seeming pauper to-morrow if he asked you. (*enter* Violet *from house*, L.) Well, dearest, have you been "fondly dreaming" of the coming lover, the house in Mayfair, and the "Marriage in High Life" announcement in the "Court Circular"?

Vio. No, I've been dreaming of a highly proper old married woman, whose name —— wasn't yours.

Ad. Why, you impudent puss, what do you mean to insinuate?

Vio. I never insinuate. Haven't you been flirting with that fascinating young man, Mr. Sharpe, for the last half-hour? I consider it my duty to tell Guardy.

Ad. Oh, do; perhaps he'll believe you and be jealous; and when you do, don't mention that Mr. Sharpe was courting me for you.

Vio. The odious little wretch!

Ad. Oh! Vi, Vi, still thinking of that painter. Well, that's all over. He's been here.

Vio. (*eagerly*) Oh! has he?

Ad. Yes, and he's gone away.

Vio. Ah! no—you're teasing?

Ad. My dear, has it ever struck you that as a "highly proper old married woman" and the wife of your guardian, I had a duty which it was not too late to perform?

Vio. Indeed! what was that, pray?

Ad. Why, to tell Mr. Browne of the circumstances in which you are placed and to rely on his honour to leave you.

Vio. (*angrily*) You did this?

Ad. Assuredly.

Vio. And he's gone?

Ad. Mr. Browne will never see you again.

Vio. (*impetuously*) I hate you! No, I can't hate you, but

(*angrily sarcastic*) I'm greatly obliged to you for the warm interest you take in my affairs.

AD. (*coolly*) Yes, I knew so unromantic a young lady would be the first to rejoice at the termination of a compromising acquaintance. And now you will marry Sir Walter.

VIO. (*angrily*) I won't.

AD. My love, don't make rash assertions.

VIO. I don't care. I won't, I won't, I won't, so there! I won't look at him when he comes.

AD. And yet I don't mind betting a pair of diamond earrings that you will marry Sir Walter.

VIO. Betting's vulgar. But I'll wager a hundred pairs that I won't.

AD. One pair is quite enough, and you'll be rich enough to pay if you lose. Now we had better go in.

VIO. I'm going to stay out here and read.

AD. Well, you must have my shawl over your shoulders, it is getting chilly. (VIOLET *sits*, C., ADELE *places shawl around her, and exit*, L.)

VIO. How easily he was persuaded to leave me. He couldn't have been half so much in love as he looked. I'm glad he's gone. He was only an adventurer for my money. Oh! you little beast, how can you say such a thing? If he were an adventurer would he have left you without a word when Adèle appealed to his honour in her absurd romantic way. No, he's all generosity and honour, and I don't care if he does have to earn his living. I wish I had to earn mine too. (*opens book*) Yes, *she* was better off than I am. (*reads*) "He was but a landscape painter, and a village maiden she." I wish I were a "village maiden"—No, I don't. She was a horrid little coquette, I'm sure. Now, I know just what sort of a girl that was. She wore short skirts and put out her foot when she sat down, and always turned her eyes down when she was spoken to, to shew her eyelashes. I don't believe in these village maidens. (*reads. Enter* BROWNE, R. 2 E., *comes slowly up behind seat*)

BRO. You are studious, Miss Saville. (VIOLET *starts, then with a delighted smile on her face says very distantly*)

VIO. I thought you had left.

BRO. May I ask why?

VIO. Mrs. Gale—that is—well, I thought perhaps you had grown tired of the scenery.

BRO. There is something here which interests me more than the scenery.

VIO. You mean the legends?

BRO. No, something more real than the legends, more lovely than the scenery, more fragrant than the firs——

VIO. Oh, to be sure—the cheese.

BRO. (*aside*) Provoking little puss! (*aloud*) And were you sorry when you thought I had gone?

VIO. I, Mr. Browne? Why should *I* be sorry? (*aside*) I wish he wouldn't stand behind there and ask embarrassing questions.

BRO. What are you reading? (*looking over her shoulder; she holds book up to him.* SHARPE *enters stealthily,* R. 3 E., *sees them, makes signs of cunning delight, and unseen climbs into tree overhanging pond*) Oh! Tennyson's "Lord of Burleigh." (*reads*) "In her ear he whispers gaily, If my heart by signs can tell, Maiden, I have watched thee daily and I think thou lov'st me well."

SHAR. (*aside*) Beastly familiarity!

BRO. Pretty lines.

VIO. I wonder by what "signs" he judged?

BRO. Perhaps she snubbed him! Won't you read on?

VIO. Oh! but I know what follows.

BRO. Yes, but I want to hear *you* speak it. (*aside*) So much, oh! so much.

VIO. (*reading timidly*) "She replies in accents fainter, (*with feeling*) There is none I love like thee."

SHAR. (*aside*) Immodest little minx!

BRO. How delightfully you do read. (*aside*) She means it. (*aloud*) Pray go on.

VIO. "He was but a landscape painter and a village maiden she."

BRO. Ah, that's where he was fortunate. If she'd been a wealthy heiress he would never have dared to speak out manfully like that; she—she'd think he loved her for her money.

SHAR. (*aside*) Quite right too.

VIO. Then she'd be a mean horror who didn't deserve any man's love. But he was deceiving her all the time, for he wasn't a poor painter at all, but a great lord.

BRO. How does it go on? (VIOLET *holds book up to him again; he reads*) "He to lips that fondly falter presses his without reproof."

SHAR. (*aside*) Beastly!

BRO. How sweet that is.

VIO. (*very gently*) What?

BRO. That line. I can see her lips trembling for very joy and unresisting taking and perhaps returning his embrace The first kiss of love!

VIO. (*dreamily*) Yes, it's very pretty.

SHAR. (*aside*) It's immodest.

BRO. There is something so suggestive of her entire con-

fidence in him in those words "without reproof!"—"Presses his without reproof." Such a moment is never repeated in a life-time. (*getting his head gradually nearer and nearer hers. She does not stir*) "Presses his without reproof." (*passionately and suddenly*) Violet, my love!

VIO. My darling, my darling! (*throws her head up towards his. Embrace*)

SHAR. Disgusting! (*craning out of tree in his excitement he loses his hold. The bough breaks with a crash and he falls into pond. Loud splash.* VIOLET *disengages herself with a scream and rushes into house,* L.)

BRO. The devil! (*turns and sees* SHARPE; *laughs heartily*) Ha! ha! ha! (*going up to pond*) Why, my dear fellow, do you usually bathe with all your clothes on? Shall I send for a gaff and have you properly landed? Why, how on earth, or rather in the water, did you get there? (*following* SHARPE'S *eyes sees broken bough*) Oh! I see. You were birds'-nesting. Ah! didn't you know what always happens to the bad little boys in the Sunday-school books when they go a birds'-nesting?

SHAR. (*speaking at wing, where he has his trousers painted to look muddy*) Perhaps you'll be so good as to help me out.

BRO. Oh, certainly, if you are ready. I thought you were going to take a swim round perhaps.

SHAR. (*snappishly*) I wish you'd make haste; the leeches are beginning to bite!

BRO. Why, they'll get a meal at your expense. Oh, that'll never do. Here! (*gives him a hand and drags him out.* SHARPE'S *trousers look wet and muddy to above the knees*) Now what have you to say for yourself?

SHAR. (*excitedly*) Sir, your conduct is disgraceful.

BRO. (*very cool*) What! for helping you out of the pond. Oh! You ungrateful young man, you're as bad as the Genius in the Arabian Nights.

SHAR. What right have you to make love to that young lady?

BRO. What right have you to ask?

SHAR. She's engaged to another gentleman, sir!

BRO. Indeed! You know him perhaps?

SHAR. Yes. She's engaged to my particular friend, Sir Walter Mervyn.

BRO. Oh! your particular friend, eh? Well, I wouldn't for the world cut out Sir Walter Mervyn.

SHAR. Then what do you mean by that—that disgusting attitude in which I saw you, sir?

BRO. Would you deign to explain?

SHAR. You know quite well I just saw you kiss Miss Saville.

BRO. (*coolly taking him by the shoulders and looking in his eyes*) The poor fellow is suffering from D. T. beyond a doubt.

SHAR. Yes, sir, you were actually embracing—

BRO. Have you been drinking *very* hard?

SHAR. Hang it! Do you mean to insinuate——

BRO. Yes, very wild about the eyes.

SHAR. Do you mean to assert that I did not see you and Miss Saville together on that bench?

BRO. You are evidently the victim of alcoholic hallucination.

SHAR. ——And you read poetry. (*growing more and more excited*)

BRO. Poetry! Let this be a warning to you to drink less in future.

SHAR. ——And then you kissed her, sir! (*walking about excitedly*)

BRO. Delirium tremens as sure as fate! To bed with you, quick. (*hustling him*)

SHAR. Am I to be faced out of my own eyes?

BRO. Your own eyes are coming out of your face. You'd better go to bed.

SHAR. Can't I trust my senses?

BRO. You've none to trust.

SHAR. Didn't I see Miss Saville?

BRO. All hallucination.

SHAR. On that seat?

BRO. Horrors, my boy, horrors.

SHAR. With a poetry-book in her hand?

BRO. Oh! you're getting dangerous. Go to bed. (BROWNE *has been pushing* SHARPE *towards* L.; *at each sentence* SHARPE *revolves to face* BROWNE; *he now stumbles against seat, sees, and pounces on book*)

SHAR. Then what's this? And what is it open at? (*reads*) "The Lord of Burleigh." "In her ear he whispers gaily." Faugh! What stuff! Now, sir, am I suffering from delirium tremens, alcoholic hallucination? Eh, sir? (*aside*) I wonder if he'll hit me if I call him an infernal scoundrel as he is? Better not commit myself though. (*horn of diligence heard; aloud*) Sir, I shall inform Mr. Gale of your conduct immediately on his arrival, and I shall also inform my friend, Sir Walter, and leave it to him to deal with you. (*aside*) He'll bolt now and leave the coast clear.

BRO. Well, I'm quite contented to be left in Sir Walter's hands.

SHAR. We shall see, sir, we shall see. Ah! here comes Mr. Gale.

BRO. Then I'm off. Be merciful, great man, be merciful.

(*Exit rapidly*, L. I. E.)

SHAR. Why, I believe I might have indulged the luxury of calling him an infernal scoundrel after all. He can't have much pluck running off like that. However, he's out of the way now, and it only remains for Sir Walter to be told of the kissing. (*enter* GALE, R. 2 E., *preceded by* PORTER *carrying travelling bag, rug, &c., who crosses and exit into hotel*) Ah! Gale, it's a good thing you have arrived!

GALE. (*aside*) How did this confounded prig get here (*aloud*) You're extremely good to say so, I'm sure. Does my presence afford you such ineffable delight?

SHAR. No—that is, I mean yes, of course—but oh! there have been such awful goings-on.

GALE. Indeed! Has Bismarck ordered the expulsion of all War Office clerks?

SHAR. It's no joking matter, I assure you. My dear Gale, I only hope you may be in time!

GALE. For dinner? I hope so too sincerely.

SHAR. You must put a stop to it directly.

GALE. What, to dinner? Not if I know it.

SHAR. Good heavens, man, I'm not joking, I tell you.

GALE. Well, you don't look very jocular, especially about the legs. What in the name of all that's ridiculous have you been up to?

SHAR. You may well look at my trousers. If I hadn't fallen into that pond I don't know what mightn't have happened. No use talking about it!

GALE. Then don't.

SHAR. Oh! his infernal coolness will drive me crazy. I tell you the goings-on have been awful. No use talking about it!

GALE. Well, but if you don't talk about it, how the devil am I to know what goings-on have been awful?

SHAR. I was up the tree—

GALE. I always thought you too prudent to be up a tree.

SHAR. I was up that tree—

GALE. What the deuce were you doing there? that's not an apple tree.

SHAR. (*quickly*) I was up that tree and she was sitting on that bench and he came up behind her and they began to read poetry—ugh! how I hate poetry—and—and—he kissed her!

GALE. Shocking! Now at the risk of being deemed troublesome and even obtuse, might I ask you to slightly amplify your already very lucid account? For instance, who kissed whom?

SHAR. I shall go hopping mad. I tell you I was up that tree——

GALE. No, you really mustn't go up that tree again; you came out of that already.

SHAR. No, I fell out of it into that pond.

GALE. Well, the cold water doesn't appear to have modified your ardent spirits.

SHAR. There! Now *he* thinks I'm drunk. I haven't touched any ardent spirits to-day. I don't spend my money on the beastly German stuff. But I distinctly saw him kiss her and she didn't mind it—she liked it—there!

GALE. Well, "Bonnie Jockie blithe and gay kissed sweet Jeannie makin' hay," and *she* didn't mind it, *she* liked it. Now who the deuce is *he?*

SHAR. He? A confounded painter-fellow, a cad named Browne, a long-legged, insolent, overbearing paint-brush. He said I had D.T., and he kissed her under my very eyes.

GALE. Pooh! man, you are drunk. What the deuce do I care about a painter named Browne and his kissings.

SHAR. Oh! I'm drunk, am I? and perhaps this seat is drunk, and perhaps this book is drunk, (*seeing shawl lying on ground at foot of bench*) and perhaps this shawl is drunk too? Now do you believe she was here?

GALE. (*snatching shawl; aside*) My wife's! Good heavens! Can *she*——no, no, I won't be moved, it's against my principles. (*aloud*) Now, sir, what does all this prove?

SHAR. It proves that she *was* sitting there and he *did* come behind her, and they *were* reading poetry, and he *did* kiss her. No use talking about it.

GALE. You saw this?

SHAR. Of course I did, I——

GALE. (*unceremoniously*) There, that'll do. Get out of this. Here comes my wife. I wish to see her alone.

SHAR. (*ruefully*) I think I'll go and change my trousers. (*exit into house*, L.; *as* ADELE *enters they cross on terrace*)

AD. (*looking after him*) Well, Mr. Sharpe, I admire your bathing costume. (*seeing* GALE) Oh! my dear, darling old husband, have you arrived at last? (*runs towards him with open arms, he coldly repulses her*) Won't you kiss me?

GALE. Don't be childish.

AD. This is worse than ever. Your coldness is unendurable.

GALE. It contrasts unfavourably with the ardour of Mr. Browne, I suppose? (*sneeringly*)

AD. Ah! he is something like a lover now! (*unsuspectingly*)

GALE. Confound it, do you dare tell me this to my face?

AD. (*aside*) Why, he's angry—come, that's something—but what can it be about?

GALE. I thought that if you *were* cursed with a ridiculous

impetuosity of temper, I could at least trust you with my honour! Mr. Sharpe has told me all.

AD. (*aside*) The little sneak must have told him about Sir Walter and Violet. (*aloud*) Well, I'm sure I did all I could to prevent it.

GALE. (*in astounded anger*) Did all you could to prevent it! Your coolness is really admirable. Is every vagabond to be allowed to kiss you and you calmly excuse yourself thus?

AD. (*aside*) Kiss me! What on earth does he mean?

GALE. Sharpe saw a fellow named Browne kissing you on that seat—can you deny it?

AD. (*aside*) The crowning bliss of my existence! Fate smiles on me. He is jealous. Oh! rapture! (*aloud*) Well, there's nothing in that. (*very calmly*)

GALE. (*more and more angry*) Nothing! Do you consider it nothing for you—my wife—to be kissed by every strolling vagabond like a wench at a fair?

AD. (*enthusiastically*) Oh, but you've no idea what a splendid fellow Mr. Browne is—he isn't at all a strolling vagabond.

GALE. You are shameless. This comes of your cursed French education. I shall have a separation.

AD. Now, Arthur, having treated me to the unique pleasure of seeing you exhibit a little temper and jealousy, perhaps you will just listen to me. What ought a woman to expect from her husband? Constant love? Have you shewn me much of that? Tender consideration? Have you ever spared your wife the chagrin of your biting sarcasms? Unwearying attention? When have you not thought it a bore to have to endure my society for a few hours? *Que voulez-vous?*

GALE. I suppose you would have me perpetually fondling you in public like these Germans do; or running after your skirts all day like a provincial Frenchman.

AD. Do you think a woman does not in her heart prefer the attentions of her own husband to all the butterfly admiration she extracts from other men? And if her husband shews no desire for her society, treats her with uniform cold kindness, can he wonder if her ears are likely to be open to the blandishments of a stranger?

GALE. (*aside*) She's not far wrong; perhaps I have carried my hatred of demonstrativeness to excess.

AD. Have you been to me all that I had a right to expect?

GALE. And if I were to confess such a fault, is that any excuse for *your* conduct?

AD. For what conduct?

GALE. Do not begin to prevaricate. I have told you what Sharpe saw.

AD. Did he say he saw anyone kiss *me?*

GALE. He gave me your shawl, I tell you.

AD. Mr. Sharpe is a donkey and you are another.

GALE. (*eagerly*) What! Is it not true?

AD. Do you confess you were jealous—very jealous?

GALE. Confound it, of course I was.

AD. Will you promise to be more attentive to me in future if I tell you the truth? Then I declare that no man but yourself has ever kissed me since I left off pinafores, nor ever shall. Now kiss me yourself.

GALE. My pet! (*embrace*)

AD. (*affecting surprise*) Eh? Do you know any more of those words?

GALE. My love, my darling, my sweet, sweet wife. (*they sit*)

AD. I didn't know you were capable of such eloquence.

GALE. What a fool I was to be jealous! But your shawl——

AD. You weren't a fool to be jealous—it was the highest ambition of my life, but you were a goose to take a shawl in evidence. Shawls can be worn by others than their owners.

GALE. Of course; but who was wearing this one this afternoon?

AD. Violet.

GALE. The deuce! then that fellow was kissing Violet?

AD. Precisely so.

GALE. But Walter Mervyn is expected every moment!

AD. Well!

GALE. Well! Your ineffable *sang-froid* does you credit. Don't you know that meddlesome prig, Sharpe, will tell him what he saw?

AD. Naturally.

GALE. And he won't propose. Oh! I'd rather be on a railway committee any day than guardian to a marriageable girl. What's to be done? (*getting up and walking about*) Hadn't you sense enough to prevent this?

AD. Oh! you dear old goose! Listen to the few and precious words which fall from the lips of wisdom appertaining to your wife. Browne, the landscape painter, and Sir Walter Mervyn are one and the same person.

GALE. Seriously?

AD. Seriously.

GALE. How did you know?

AD. I found it out by my woman's wit and made him confess. Not wishing to marry a girl who had no choice, he scraped acquaintance with us in disguise, and, in spite of my

efforts, succeeded in making an impression on Violet's heart.

GALE. Yes—and on her lips too, it appears.

AD. Your fascinating War Office friend, Mr. Sharpe, however, is not without enterprise too. He too aspires to the hand and fortune of your ward, and fancies if he can compromise Violet he will prevent Sir Walter from proposing, cut out the imaginary Browne, and walk over the course.

GALE. Excellent joke !

AD. Then keep it up a little longer. Vi might be chagrined to find her romantic act of self-sacrifice uncalled for, and Mr. Sharpe ought to be played with a little longer. I think our duty towards our neighbour demands that.

GALE. I won't intefere. But look where he comes. By Jove ! he's more excited than ever.

Enter SHARPE *from house, very excited.*

SHAR. Oh ! I *say*, such a discovery ! No use talking about it ! I knew he was a scoundrel, but I never hoped he was a criminal—a crime-stained felon.

ADELE *goes up*, L.

GALE. Most incoherent youth, who's the he this time ?

SHAR. Oh ! such an affair has happened—no use talking about it.

GALE. Then it can't be very important.

SHAR. I don't mean that—you re always chaffing a fellow. But you don't know what has happened. No use talk——

GALE. Well, what *has* happened ?

SHAR. (*importantly*) Forgery !

GALE. }
AD. } Forgery ?

SHAR. (*rapidly and incoherently*) Yes. I was just going to the bank with my circular note and I met the landlord, and he had this cheque in his hand, and he asked if I would be so good, as I was going to the bank, as to get it cashed, and I said yes. I don't mind their cheek in this country, they don't mean it, and I thought I'd find out whose it was, and how much he drew for ; so I took it, and it was on London, and whom do you think it was signed by ?

GALE. How under heaven can I tell ?

SHAR. Sir Walter Mervyn !

GALE. (*very unconcernedly*) You don't say so.

SHAR. Yes, look at it. (*shews cheque*) There, what's that ? "Walter Mervyn ;" and who do you think wrote it ? That painting scoundrel Browne !

AD. (*up stage*) How horrible !

SHAR. (*turning to her*) It isn't horrible. It's good ; it's

splendid ; it's capital ! I always told you what sort of a fellow he was. Now do you believe me ? Now will Miss Saville let him kiss her again ? Now I'd like to know where he'll find himself ?

GALE. In gaol as a matter of course.

SHAR. Of course. You must have him arrested. You are Sir Walter's friend. I'll fetch the village bobby.

GALE. Do.

SHAR. You keep your eye on him ; don't let him smell a rat and escape. I'll fetch the bobby, never fear. (*going*, R. ; *aside*) Sharpe, my boy, I don't think I'm committing myself if I say you're in luck. Browne's out of your way now. You're a smart fellow, Sharpe, no use talking about it. (*exit*, R. 1 E.)

GALE. Well, darling. (*no answer*) Well, darling.

AD. (*turning round*) Beg pardon, were you speaking to me ?

GALE. Why, to whom else do you think ?

AD. Oh, that I can't say. But I'm so unused to hearing myself addressed so affectionately.

GALE. Come, don't bear malice. What do you think of the state of affairs now ?

AD. Oh, simply delicious. (*coming down*)

GALE. Well, I'm glad you take such a cheerful view. To me the aspect appears to be rather mixed. My friend Mervyn has gone and forged his own name and my ward has gone and committed herself to her own intended.

AD. Precisely. That's not very dreadful, is it ?

GALE. Well, what course do you propose ?

AD. The right one you may be sure.

GALE. Ah ! that goes without saying. Speak, my oracle.

AD. Well, you must upbraid Violet properly for her indiscreet conduct, insist on her renouncing Browne and accepting Sir Walter. Inform her of the criminal propensities of her lover and adjure her in the name of her departed father. The story of the forgery will have such an effect on her that instead of being piqued when she learns the trick that has been played on her, the revulsion of feeling at finding the man she loves is not guilty of crime will be so powerful that she will forget to exhibit any maidenly contrariness. "Jack shall have Jill, nought shall go ill," and so on.

GALE. Spoken like a book. "Oh ! wise young judge, how do I honour thee."

AD. (*demurely*) Oh, "love and cherish" is quite enough thanks. Here she comes. Now for a parental severity of countenance.

Enter VIOLET *from hotel.*

VIO. (*running towards* GALE) Oh ! my dear Guardy ! (GALE *turns away*) What's the matter ?

AD. (L.) Oh! fie, Violet, do you see this shawl? (*shewing it*)

GALE. (R.) Do you see this book? (*shewing book left on seat*)

VIO. (C.) Of course I do—I just came to fetch them.

AD. Well, next time you are discovered in a compromising situation, would it be too much to request that you won't be wearing my things?

GALE. And next time you let a gentleman read spoony poetry to you, would it be too much to request that you won't use my Tennyson?

VIO. (*who has been looking from one to the other in some amazement*) So that little horror has told you.

GALE. Are you surprised at that?

VIO. No, only I should so have liked to have told you first myself.

GALE. Well, that's ingenuous. What have you to say?

VIO. Don't look so awfully grumpy, and I'll tell you all. Now, Guardy, don't be a cross old griffin. I do so want you to be sweet and amiable. Adèle, darling, do coax him. Oh! Guardy, I love him so and he loves me, and I'll never, never marry anybody else.

GALE. Am I listening to Miss Violet Saville, who is engaged to Sir Walter Mervyn, and is she referring to some other gentleman?

VIO. I'm not engaged to Sir Walter—I won't be—never if I live to be a hundred and he comes and asks me then. I'm speaking of Mr. Browne and I'm engaged to him.

GALE. Of course you know of this gentleman. He is a man of means, of character, of position?

VIO. I don't think he's very rich, and I know nothing about his position, but no one but a gentleman and a man of honour could have won my heart.

GALE. Beautiful sentiment! Now, Violet, be reasonable. You have been fascinated by an unscrupulous adventurer.

VIO. How dare you say that?

GALE. I am not in the habit of making rash statements. (*aside*) What a cruel beast I feel. (*aloud*) I have reason to believe that he has committed a serious crime. Now be calm. I would not state this if I had not the most conclusive proof. Within this hour he has written Sir Walter Mervyn's name to a cheque. (VIOLET *looks at him for a second as if not comprehending—then screams and staggers back.* ADELE *places her in seat.* BROWNE *rushes in,* C. 1 E., *at cry and starts for* VIOLET. GALE *intercepts*)

GALE. How dare you, sir? (BROWNE *takes a step forward*) Stand back. Adèle, take Violet into the house. (ADELE *raises* VIOLET *and supports her towards house. On terrace she turns and says boldly*)

VIOLET. It is false. He simply couldn't do it. Others might—he never.

GALE. (*to* BROWNE *who tries to advance*) Back, sir. (ADELE *forces* VIOLET *into house.* GALE *immediately changes manner, seizes* BROWNE'S *hand.*) My dear Mervyn, how do you do? You're a pretty sort of a masquerader, you are.

BRO. What have you been doing to my Violet?

GALE. *Your* Violet already, eh? Well, I've been informing her that her captivating young man has committed forgery, that's all. You are a clever personator with a vengeance. So perfectly do you perform your part that my innocent little wife sees through you like water, and to add to your chances of escaping discovery, you go and sign your own name to a cheque.

BRO. Well, you wouldn't have me sign another man's, would you?

GALE. It was my duty to warn my ward against you, sir.

BRO. (*eagerly*) You didn't tell her who I was?

GALE. *Tout au contraire.* I told her you had forged Sir Walter's name.

BRO. And how did she take it?

GALE. You heard her answer.

BRO. Bless her! I must go to her at once and explain all.

GALE. (R.) Don't be so confoundedly impulsive. You'll have all the fat in the fire if you do.

BRO. (L.) But it seems so cruel. I was a fool to play such a trick—as romantic as a school-girl, and I deserve to lose her.

Enter SHARPE, R. 2 E.

SHAR. (*to* GALE, *not seeing* BROWNE) I've brought the *gens d'armes.*

GALE. And here is your prisoner. Permit me to introduce you—Sir Walter Mervyn; Mr. Sharpe, of Her Majesty's Civil Service.

SHAR. (*utterly aghast*) Sir—Sir Walter! (*gradually backs as* BROWNE *approaches him with hand extended*)

BRO. Don't you know me, Mr. Sharpe? I thought you told me Sir Walter was one of your most intimate friends.

SHAR. (*staring at him open-mouthed for a second and then making a dash past him towards* L.) Committed myself. No use talking about it. (*calls*) Here, Karl, Fritz, pack my trunk, get my bill, order a chaise; I'm off to Southend. No use talking about it. (*exit quickly,* L. 1 E.)

GALE. Ha! ha! ha! that's another heiress in our friend's list scratched. Now then, off with you, change that fantastic attire and appear as the great Milord. Begone. The partner

of my bosom returneth. (*exit* BROWNE *into hotel as* ADELE *enters*) Well!

AD. Poor Violet! she's broken-hearted. She declares she'll never marry.

GALE. That's not serious. All your sex say that. It's the first thing on the lips of a débutante when she starts on the war-path and the last thing on the lips of a widow before she takes her second husband.

AD. She says she'll never go out again.

GALE. Easily cured. Tell her her new costume is just too awfully lovely.

AD. She declares all men are wicked monsters.

GALE. Introduce her to a show curate with an interesting cough.

AD. She says the world is hollow and life not worth having.

GALE. Tell her you've a card for her to the Prince of Wales's garden-party.

AD. Cynic! I believe you think women are made up of frivolity.

GALE. My dear, after the startling revelations of these latter days, I wouldn't venture to give utterance to an opinion as to *what* women are "made up" of.

AD. She's terribly cut up, and I wish this stupid *ruse* had never gone on—hush, here she is. (*enter* VIOLET *from hotel*)

VIO. Mr. Gale, I wish to return to England at once.

GALE. But, my dear Violet, Sir Walter has just arrived.

VIO. I won't see Sir Walter.

GALE. Now, do be reasonable. Because you fancy you are in love with this adventurer and are disappointed in him—

VIO. (*petulantly*) I'm not disappointed in him.

GALE. (*mildly*) Well, dear, perhaps you expected that he went about with all manners of crimes and misdemeanours stowed away about his person. But is that, I would ask, any reason for refusing to see your cousin, who has come all this way to meet you—for disobeying your father's dying request?

VIO. My poor father!

GALE. Yes. Did it ever strike you that apart from the mercenary aspect of the case you owe it to your dead father's memory to endeavour to marry the man he chose for you?

VIO. I'll never marry now. The only man I ever could love has deceived me beyond measure—and I'll never speak civilly to another as long as I live.

AD. (*on seat*, R.) And I shall lose my earrings.

GALE. Well, tell him so himself—for here he is. (*enter* BROWNE *from hotel, costume changed to fashionable travelling suit. He manages to keep his face hidden from* VIOLET, *whose*

eyes are generally fixed on the ground. BROWNE *speaks in feigned voice*) Mervyn, this is your cousin, Violet Saville.

BRO. I'm delighted to see my little play-fellow again and grown so, too. (GALE *joins* ADELE *at seat*, R. VIOLET, R. C., BROWN, L. C.)

VIO. That's silly. People generally do grow between the ages of eight and twenty.

BRO. Egad, that's true. Won't you kiss me? Cousins do kiss, you know.

VIO. (*sharply*) I don't know and I wouldn't if I did. (*suddenly changing to tone of entreaty*) Oh! Walter, can't we remain cousins?

BRO. Well, as your father, and my mother were brother and sister I don't see what else we can well be.

VIO. (*eagerly turning towards him*) You object to cousins marrying. Oh! how good you are!

BRO. (*covering his face with his hat*) Not in the least. I rather believe in it. I should be sorry indeed were it otherwise, now I have seen you.

VIO. (*aside*) Oh! what shall I do! (*aloud*) Walter, I cannot marry you. My love has been stolen from me by one who is unworthy and I can never marry another.

BRO. (*aside*) My true-hearted, faithful girl!

VIO. But I will be a sister to you. Do not ask me to be more. *You* are not bound by that terrible will.

BRO. You mistake. I *am* bound to try and win you.

VIO. By what?

BRO. By the love you have kindled in my breast. (VIOLET *turns away sadly*) By the inextinguishable passion which your tones have aroused in my soul, by the infinite yearning which possesses me to call you my own. Reconsider your hasty words and let your pride help you to overcome a passing weakness for an unworthy object.

VIO. The passing weakness is stronger than I.

BRO. Will you take time to think over all that depends upon your answer?

VIO. Do you intend to ask in form?

BRO. I must.

VIOLET *sinks into seat*, L. *side*; BROWNE *goes up behind seat*; GALE *comes down and sits beside* VIOLET, *taking her hand.*

GALE. My poor little Violet, are you so hurt?

VIO. (*clinging to him*) Guardy, dear Guardy, take me away, do take me away.

GALE. Were you not reading Tennyson's "Lord of Burleigh" to-day?

VIO. Why do you ask?

GALE. Don't you remember how the great lord who hated to fancy himself loved for his lands and his titles came to woo the maiden of his choice in the disguise of a poor landscape painter?

VIO. (*starting violently; breathlessly*) Yes!

GALE. You see these great men who are accustomed from childhood to know that everything they want must become theirs perforce, often sigh for the boon of a woman's love given to themselves, not to their greatness.

VIO. Yes! yes!

GALE. And so they resort to innocent deception. They present themselves to the object of their choice as poor and nameless, and when they think they have won her heart they summon courage and staking all on the venture they say——(BROWNE, *who has been listening, touches him to be silent; then in his natural voice and in attitude of previous scene, continues*)

BRO. "Maiden, I have watched thee daily and I think thou lov'st me well." (VIOLET, *who has been sitting erect, panting with excitement, gives a stifled scream, rises, runs down stage, and stands facing him. He, holding out both hands, comes from behind seat.* VIOLET, *crying* "No, no," *makes a dart towards house and gets on to first step, where he intercepts her, takes her by the hand and looks entreatingly up at her; then places his arm round her waist and she gradually, as it were, melts to his embrace*)

AD. (*coming down*) And my diamond earrings?

VIO. (*down, c.*) Well, I don't think you have won them fairly. But I'll ask *them.* (*to audience*) Do *you* think she deserves to be rewarded for helping to delude a poor innocent? Because if you say so she shall have the earrings and I'll haul down my own flag even if (*taking* WALTER'S *hand*) my captor has been sailing UNDER FALSE COLOURS.

Curtain.

NOTE.—*If preferred the curtain may be rung down slow to tableau, after* VIOLET'S *recognition of* SIR WALTER, *and no tag spoken.*

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